

CLAIMS:

1. A device for monitoring and identifying a vehicle in at least one parking zone, the device including

5 a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle in a parking zone into the device;

10 communication means for receiving reference identification particulars of vehicles communicated from a remote station to the device;

storage means for storing said reference identification particulars;

timing means for timing the duration for which the vehicle is parked in the parking zone;

15 processor means connected to the input means and to the storage means, the processor means including comparator means for comparing the input identification particulars with the reference identification particulars, the processor means being operable to calculate a monetary amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone so that the device functions as a parking meter;

20 signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to said comparison;

display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and

monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

25 2. A device for monitoring and identifying a vehicle in at least one parking zone, the device including

a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle in a parking zone into the device;

communication means for sending the input identification particulars to a remote station and for receiving the result of a comparison performed at the remote station between the input identification and the reference identification particulars in order to identify the vehicle;

signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to said result;

timing means for timing the duration for which the vehicle is parked in the parking zone;

processor means for calculating a monetary amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone;

display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and

monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

3. A device as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, in which the monetary receiving means includes card reading means for reading information stored on a card and feeding it to the processor means for processing payment electronically.

20 4. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the processor means defines the timing means.

5. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the identification particulars are displayed on the display means.

25 6. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which includes a printer for printing a hard-copy of selected data.

7. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the input means includes a keypad via which the identification particulars of the vehicle and the parking zone are manually entered.

5 8. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the input means includes a reader capable of reading in a wireless fashion a tag device in or on the vehicle, the tag device carrying the said identification particulars of the vehicle.

9. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the communication means is a wireless communication link.

10 10. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which includes enabling means for selectively enabling the device.

11. A device as claimed in Claim 10, in which the enabling means is defined by processor means and the input means in such a fashion so that upon entry of a correct PIN number the device is enabled.

15 12. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the reference identification particulars are reference identification particulars of stolen vehicles.

20 13. A system for monitoring and identifying vehicles in a plurality of parking zones, the system including  
a remote station at which reference identification particulars of vehicles are stored; and  
at least one device for identifying a vehicle parked in one of a plurality of parking zones with which the device is associated, the device